

HISTORY OF UNION COUNTY,
NORTH CAROLINA

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by

H. Nelson Walden

Approved by:

Irwin Van Noppen
Chairman of Thesis Committee

Eratis Williams
Director of Graduate Study

H. Yoder
Major Professor

John G. Barden
Minor Professor

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ABSTRACT

Union County is located in the southern part of the Piedmont of North Carolina. Its recorded history began around 1700 when John Lawson studied the Waxhaw Indians who lived in the area. After the Indians left the area, Scotch-Irish began to settle there. This was only a short time before 1750. Quickly thereafter Germans and immigrants from other parts of North Carolina and South Carolina began to arrive, bringing with them their particular religious denominations. Eventually three denominations became most popular: Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian.

Agriculture was self-sufficient at first. The farms were usually small except in the western part of the area. They produced all the necessities of life. As the number of people increased and roads were built, farming tended to become centered around the growing of cotton. Diversification of crops and farm products along with scientific farming practices came with farm agents and agriculture classes in schools during the twentieth century.

1842 was an important date, for this was when the county began its political identity. As a result of action by the General Assembly of North Carolina, Union County was formed from parts of the counties of Mecklenburg and Anson.

Before Union had much chance to breathe freely, the Mexican War began. Although Union furnished an ample number of soldiers, the war only slightly affected it. The Civil War had a greater effect. Killed and wounded men and scarcity of capital were the marks it left.

World War I and World War II, the depression of the thirties, the Space Age, the Korean War, better communication media, and racial agitation abruptly enlarged the sphere of thought and jarred old ways of thinking for the people.

What has happened in recent years to social and economic life can be summed up in the words "change and improvement." Perhaps these words are also beacons for the future.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. BEFORE THE WHITE MAN CAME	5
III. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS: CHRONOLOGY OF COUNTY HISTORY	11
IV. EDUCATION	38
V. RELIGION	49
VI. POLITICS AS REPRESENTED BY GUBERNATORIAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS	58
VII. AGRICULTURE	67
VIII. RESOURCES, TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, INDUSTRY	78
IX. SUMMARY	93
BIBLIOGRAPHY	98

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

What is attempted herein is the writing of a history of Union County, North Carolina. What is not attempted is the writing of a completely definitive, encyclopedic history. This thesis makes no pretensions in that direction. It has been shaped by the amount of information available, time limitations, financial limitations, the judgement of the author, and the suggestions of his faculty advisor, Dr. Ina Faye Woestemeyer Van Noppen. It may be that what is contained herein will serve as a stimulus toward additional and more extensive research and writing on the history of Union County. Perhaps the references used will enable others who investigate this historical area to save time by pointing the way to fruitful sources. This history, then, is a skeleton around which further research may develop a figure.

It is believed by the author that all history is important. The history of the United States is certainly important. It is taught in the public schools. The history of North Carolina is important. It, too, is taught in the public schools of this state. Now Union County is a part of North Carolina. If it is a part of a whole that is significant, it follows that the part is also important. Part of a whole partakes of the qualities of the whole. By this

line of reasoning the history of Union County is important. In addition it can be said that local pride is fostered by a record of the past. Mistakes of the past can be avoided. Perhaps a pattern for the future can be discerned.

This county has similarities to other counties in the state which are mostly agricultural. Changes are evolving. The pattern of development in Union County, therefore, is a clue to the understanding of the history of other places.

Union County is located in the southeastern part of the United States. Further, it is situated in the southern part of the Piedmont of North Carolina. The southern border of the county lies on the boundary between North and South Carolina. To the northwest and adjoining Union is Mecklenburg County with its relatively large population and many industries. Its influence, political, economic, and social, upon Union County is directly proportional to its size.

Directly to the north is Cabarrus County with its textile mills. But it has drawn fewer workers from Union County than Mecklenburg. On the northeast is Stanly County. The Rocky River separates Stanly and Union. Directly to the east is Anson County. To the southwest lies Lancaster, South Carolina. Many workers from Union go to and near Lancaster where the Springs Cotton Mill and Grace Bleachery are located. Lancaster County, which adjoins Union on the

south and west and whose county seat is Lancaster, and Union County have close ties. The Old Waxhaw territory extended into both counties; it was a religious, educational, and population mother to both. Amusingly, both counties claim that Andrew Jackson was born within their present boundaries. Both have historical markers to assert the fact.¹

Union County had, according to the 1960 census, six towns and villages. Monroe, the county seat, is located near the geographic center of the county. It was established shortly after the founding of the county in 1842. Waxhaw is the westernmost town in the county, being only a short distance from the South Carolina line. Mineral Springs is between Waxhaw and Monroe. Traveling eastward from Monroe one comes to Wingate and then Marshville. Almost directly north of Monroe is Unionville. Indian Trail is northwest of Monroe.

The population of Union County in 1960 was 44,670. Monroe contained 10,882 people. Marshville claimed 1,360 persons. Wingate had a population of 1,304. Waxhaw, Indian Trail, and Unionville were composed of 729, 364, and 119

¹The book, Hornet's Nest (Charlotte: McNally, 1961), Chapter 6, by LeGette Blythe and Charles Raven Brockman, has an excellent review of the evidence regarding Jackson's birthplace. The conclusion reached, to which this writer tends to subscribe, is that Jackson was born in what is now Union County.

people respectively.²

There are nine townships in the county. The eastern tier of townships, running from north to south, is composed of New Salem, Marshville, and Lanes Creek. The central tier of townships, again from north to south, is made up of Goose Creek, Monroe, and Buford. The western row of townships contains Indian Trail, Sandy Ridge, and Jackson, from north to south. Jackson and Sandy Ridge are the westernmost townships and have been settled the longest.

Union County is drained by several small streams. The largest stream in the county is the Rocky River and it is only halfway in the county, being on the boundary. The highest elevation in the county is around 700 feet in the western part. The average elevation is around 600 feet. The topography is gently rolling.

Thus described and located is Union County, about which the following is a history.

²U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "North Carolina, Number of Inhabitants," United States Census of Population, 1960, p. 5, 23, 24; hereinafter cited as 1960 Census.

CHAPTER II

BEFORE THE WHITE MAN CAME

While the history and characteristics of Union County after 1842, when the county was founded, are emphasized herein, it is nevertheless true that the land which today constitutes Union County existed before 1842. It is equally true that people lived on the land. The purpose of this chapter is to examine these people indirectly through the observations of others.

It seems likely that the Waxhaw Indians lived in or near the area now known as Union County. This is the point of view taken by the editors of The State magazine³ in an issue devoted to Union County. This is also the point of view taken by John M. Redwine in a sketch of the history of the county.⁴ It is pointed out by Douglas LeTell Rights in a book about the American Indian in North Carolina that Wisacky or Waxhaw was "in the neighborhood of the present Union County."⁵

³Bill Sharpe and Carl Goerch (ed.), "All About the Original Flatheads," The State, December, 1956, p. 21; hereinafter cited as Sharpe and Goerch, Flatheads.

⁴John M. Redwine, "Union County, Rich in Historical Heritage," reprinted as "Progress in Union County," The Monroe Journal, February 5, 1954; hereinafter cited as Redwine, Heritage.

⁵Douglas LeTell Rights, The American Indian in North Carolina (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1957), p. 64; hereinafter cited as N. C. Indian.

In about 1700 John Lawson, Surveyor-General of North Carolina, began a trip through South Carolina and North Carolina. During his trip he passed through or near where Union County now is, visiting the Waxhaw Indians for a time.⁶

While in the north central part of South Carolina, one of Lawson's party lingered too far behind the main part of the expedition and lost his way. Later he overtook John Lawson's group through the help of a Waxhaw Indian who invited Lawson to visit the Waxhaw's village.

Upon arriving at Waxhaw village, Lawson and his men were ushered into a large cabin where benches of cane were covered with deer skins and furs. They were served stewed peaches and green corn.⁷

Lawson found that the Waxhaws were called Flatheads by their neighbors because of their custom of laying

. . . the Back-part of the Children's Heads on a Bag of Sand, (such as Engravers use to rest their Plates upon.) They use a Roll which is placed upon the Babe's Forehead, it being laid with its Back on a flat Board, and swaddled hard down thereon, from one End of this Engine to the other. This Method makes the Child's Body and Limbs as straight as an Arrow, There being some young Indians that are perhaps crokkedly inclined, at their first coming into the world, who are made perfectly

⁶According to Rights (see footnote 5), "Lawson is among the best of the early writers on the subject of the Indians." Therefore, it is fitting that Lawson's description of his stay with the Waxhaw Indians be given here.

⁷Frances Latham Harris (ed.), John Lawson's History of North Carolina (originally published in 1714 in London in Pater-Noster Row, reprint in Richmond by Garrett and Massie in 1937), p. 29; hereinafter cited as Lawson.

straight by this Method. I never saw an Indian of Mature Age that was any ways crooked, except by Accident, and that way seldom; for they cure and prevent Deformities of the Limbs and Body very exactly. The Instrument I spoke of before being a sort of a press, that is let out and in, more or less, according to the Discretion of the Nurse, in which they make the Child's Head flat: it makes the Eyes stand a Prodigious Way asunder, and the Hair hang over the Forehead like the Eves of a House, which seems frightful.⁸

The Indians believed that the separation of the eyes, which was produced by the flattening of the head, resulted in better vision, especially useful in hunting. To be a good hunter was their primary aim in life. The best hunters won the prettiest females for their wives.

Lawson went on to talk about the marriage customs of the Indians. Shortly after puberty, the young Indian girls would

. . . bestow their Maidenheads on some Youth about the same Age, continuing her Favors on whom she most affects, changing her mate very often, few or none of them being constant to one, till a greater Number of Years hath made her capable of managing domestic Affairs, and she hath tried the vigor of most of the Nation she belongs to.⁹

Those females who had engaged in the greatest number of premarital liasons were most eagerly sought after by the men for marriage. To arrange a marriage the man would first court the woman, often living with her before the arrangements were complete, then obtain the consent of the parents of both and the chief. They were then considered married.

Divorce was casual. The man could simply turn the

⁸Lawson, p. 30.

⁹Lawson, p. 31.

wife out of the house. Any man who would subsequently marry her was expected to pay a price to her former husband.

Frequently, the war captains and great men of the tribe would have several wives when they were "so impotent and old, as to be incapable of making use of one of them."¹⁰

The wife was not held responsible for adultery. Her partner in adultery assuaged the anger of the husband by payment of goods. Although it was not common, the husband would sometimes lend his wife to his neighbor or someone in whom she had an interest.

The prettiest and youngest girls became a part of the chief's brothel. Their coiffure differentiated them from the other girls. The profits from their prostitution went to the chief, in whose cabin their affairs were often conducted. As the girls grew older and the "hot Assault of love" grew "colder,"¹¹ they often formed permanent attachments with a single male which would last the rest of their lives.

In the councils of state the advice of the aged was eagerly sought after and listened to respectfully. In fact, the aged were held in great veneration, none being interrupted when speaking. Not interrupting another when speaking was a rule the Waxhaws applied not only to their aged but to each other.

¹⁰Lawson, p. 33.

¹¹Lawson, p. 34.

Shrewish women were not to be found. When misused by their husbands they suffered silently, showing no sign, other than, perhaps, by not eating.

Great feasts, accompanied by dancing and masquerades, and state business were conducted in a large dwelling which resembled a "Hay-Rick."¹² At their feasts corn, stewed peaches, a thick gruel, a medley of foods, bear meat, and other foods were served after the dogs had been ceremoniously kicked out. Music was produced by a deerskin covered drum and a gourd filled with dried grains of corn. Men, dressed in feathers and disguised by masks of gourds, danced. They were followed by women who danced and marched in order of size, the largest being first. The musicians sang the history of the tribe and the exploits of their famous ancestors.

The Waxhaws believed in a life after death, in a flood, and in immortal punishment or reward for deeds committed during life.

Lawson described the land of the Waxhaws as being "a Marl as red as Blood, . . . [that] will lather like soap." The land was so fertile "that no Labor of Man in one or two Ages could make it poor."¹³

Redwine maintains that a smallpox epidemic swept through the Waxhaws in 1741, decimating their numbers to such an extent that they were no longer able to maintain

¹²Lawson, p. 35.

¹³Lawson, p. 36.

themselves as a distinct tribe and, therefore, were forced to unite with the Catawba Indians.¹⁴ That they would unite with the Catawbas seems natural when one considers that the Waxhaws and Catawbas belonged to the same family of tribes.¹⁵

¹⁴Redwine, Heritage.

¹⁵Mary C. Simms Oliphant, The History of South Carolina (Atlanta: Laidlaw Brothers, 1958), p. 31.

CHAPTER III

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS: CHRONOLOGY OF COUNTY HISTORY

It has been said in the physical sciences that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This is not completely true for the social sciences, history included. But it does seem to be partly true for history. For most events that occur there seems to be a reaction, which may or may not be proportional to the evoking event. It seems that all events that occur at any point on the surface of the earth usually have some effect, however slight or pronounced, on all subsequent events at other points on the surface of the earth and perhaps, eventually, the universe.

There is an interrelationship between the history of a locality and the history of a state or nation or world, aggregates of localities forming the history of larger areas and the history of larger areas being reflected in the events of localities. This is true for Union County, North Carolina.

Whites came to the area which was to become Union County before 1842. They at first settled in the Waxhaws.¹⁶

¹⁶B. B. Derrick and S. O. Perkins, Soil Survey of Union County, North Carolina (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), p. 6; hereinafter cited as Derrick and Perkins, Soil.

The Waxhaws is an area formerly inhabited by the Waxhaw Indians. It lies where Jackson and Sandy Ridge Townships now are in Union County and extends from there into a part of Lancaster County, South Carolina.¹⁷

By about 1750 the Waxhaw Indians had left the area where they lived--in present-day townships of Jackson and Sandy Ridge in Union County and in the northern part of Lancaster County, South Carolina--and had united with the Catawba Indians further to the west across the Catawba River.

Gradually the area of the Waxhaws began to be settled. Presbyterian Scotch-Irish who were dissatisfied with conditions in Pennsylvania finally found a place to their liking in the Waxhaws. They seem to have been a thrifty, industrious people who believed in education and religion, as shown by the fact that by 1755 they had constructed the Waxhaw Presbyterian Church, now in South Carolina but then thought to have been in North Carolina. As mentioned in Chapter IV of this thesis this church was used during the weekdays as a school.¹⁸

Land companies were organized. "The Garden of the Waxhaws"¹⁹ was advertised, and as time passed more and more settlers came.

¹⁷Redwine, Heritage.

¹⁸Redwine, Heritage.

¹⁹Redwine, Heritage.

Eventually what is today Buford Township in the southern part of the county was settled by German immigrants. The northwestern part of the county was settled by Pennsylvania Germans and people from eastern North Carolina. The eastern part of the county was also settled by people from other parts of North Carolina who were primarily of English descent, as well as settlers from Virginia. The central portion of the county, near the present county seat, was sparsely settled prior to 1760 but was later settled by people from other sections of the county.²⁰ By the beginning of the Revolutionary War all of the territory, later to be Union County, was thinly settled by these immigrants and their descendants.

Ancestors of the people of Union County took part in the Revolutionary War. Patriotic tendencies were heightened by Tarleton's massacre of Buford's men just twenty miles south of Monroe. Consequently, a number of men of the area enlisted in the Revolutionary Army, some serving with pay, others serving without compensation.²¹ The area gave at least one major and three captains to the Revolutionary Army.²² Colonel William Richardson Davie, who was later

²⁰Derrick and Perkins, Soil, p. 6.

²¹Redwine, Heritage.

²²Redwine, Heritage.

governor of North Carolina and was also instrumental in the founding of the University of North Carolina, was among the men who served.²³

Only a few events occurring within the area are known today. A battle occurred in the southeastern part of the area which is variously known as the battle of the Waxhaws or Walkup's (Waukhab's) Mill.²⁴ The Revolutionists were led by Colonel William Richardson Davis and suffered many casualties in their encounter with Cornwallis' numerically superior forces.²⁵

Tory Tree, where several Tories are said to have been hanged, is located a short distance southwest of Monroe.²⁶ There is a story to the effect that Edward Richardson was captured by Tories who carried him off, probably to kill him. Some of his Patriot friends, learning from his wife that he had been abducted, overtook his captors and captured them. Deciding to repay the Tories for capturing him, Richardson then lined up his former captors and calmly shot all sixteen

²³Viola C. Floyd, Lancaster County Tours (Lancaster County, South Carolina: Lancaster County Historical Commission, 1956), p. 44; hereinafter cited as Floyd, Lancaster.

²⁴Clyde Osborne, "Union County Likes It," Charlotte Observer, April 12, 1959; hereinafter cited as Osborne, Union.

²⁵Redwine, Heritage.

²⁶Osborne, Union.

of them one by one.²⁷

After the Revolutionary War had ended there was a great new influx of settlers.²⁸ The influx led to the next significant event in the history of the area, the establishment of its political identity. The county was formed in 1842 by an act of the General Assembly of North Carolina in response to a petition from residents of the area. Parts of Anson and Mecklenburg Counties were united to form a new county.

A supplemental act passed by the General Assembly in 1854 provided for the determination, by commissioners, of a site for the county seat. It was to be located within two miles of the center of the county as shown by the crossing of a diagonal. The act further provided that the name of the county seat should be Monroe, and that public buildings (jail, courthouse, etc.) should be erected.²⁹

The magistrates in the area to become a county were instructed to meet and form a county government. The men met on the first Monday in April, 1843, at La Batt's cross-roads. There was a dispute between the Whigs and Democrats as to the naming of the county, the Whigs favoring Clay and

²⁷"Our Heritage," The Monroe Enquirer, March 22, 1962.

²⁸Redwine, Heritage.

²⁹Redwine, Heritage.

the Democrats Jackson. As a compromise the name Union was suggested because the county was a union of parts of two others.³⁰ A more popular version for the origin of the name of the county is that it was named for the Federal union.³¹

The boundary between Union and Cabarrus Counties was authorized to be established in 1887. In 1905 the surveying and establishment of the Anson-Union boundary was authorized, with a record to be filed in the register of deeds office in each county.³²

The Mexican War began in 1846 shortly after the county was established. Union County furnished its share of volunteers. Men from Union County enlisted in Captain Harrison's company in Mecklenburg County, in Captain Avery's company in Cabarrus County, and in Captain McManus' company in Lancaster County, South Carolina. Other volunteers from the county served in other companies.³³

Slavery was most concentrated in the western part of

³⁰A. M. Stack and R. F. Beasley, Sketches of Monroe and Union County (Charlotte: News and Times Print, 1902), p. 72; hereinafter cited as Stack and Beasley, Sketches.

³¹Bill Sharpe, "From Manteo to Murphey," The State, December 1, 1956, p. 32; hereinafter cited as Sharpe, Manteo.

³²David Leroy Corbitt, The Formation of North Carolina Counties (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950), p. 210-211.

³³Redwine, Heritage.

Union County because this was where the largest farms and plantations were and where cotton was chiefly grown.³⁴ The first census report for Union County in 1850 shows a population of 8,018 whites, 51 free Negroes, and 1,982 slaves. Therefore, there was approximately one slave for every four whites, a proportion which was probably low when compared with other parts of the South.³⁵

There are conflicting interpretations of the mutual roles of white masters and Negro slaves in the South. One interpretation holds that the treatment of slaves was paternalistic, sometimes harsh but for the most part benevolent. A second interpretation holds that slavery was completely bad in almost all respects.³⁶ The stories extant about slavery in Union County do not seem to uphold the paternalistic view to any large extent.

A runaway Negro slave was dragged into Monroe, with a log chain around his neck, by his drunken master. The master was charged with murder, but by pleading an old

³⁴Derrick and Perkins, Soil, p. 12.

³⁵John H. Wheeler, Historical Sketches of North Carolina from 1584 to 1851, reprint of 1851 edition (New York: Frederick H. Hitchcock, 1925), p. 414.

³⁶Sidney Fine and Gerald S. Brown (ed.), The American Past: Conflicting Interpretations of the Great Issues (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1961), Vol. I, pp. 369-394.

English law, he had to pay a fine of only \$3,000 and court costs of \$390.³⁷ The money was used to build the county jail in 1847-48. The jail was later used for a Town Hall.³⁷

During the Revolutionary War a Negress and her boys rescued Hugh McCain of the Waxhaws area, who was being hanged because he would not tell the Tories where he had hidden his gold. Mrs. J. E. Austin was killed by her own Negro slaves while her husband was not at home; it is thought that the Negroes were convicted and hanged at Monroe.³⁸

A written pass from someone in the family of a slave's master was necessary before the slave was permitted to leave his owner's farm or plantation. Patrolmen were appointed to enforce this ordinance. Those without passes were chased home and sometimes whipped.³⁹

Many more soldiers from Union County served in the Civil War than in the Mexican War. Union County furnished men to the following companies in the Confederate Army:

. . . Company B, 15th N. C. Volunteers, organized May,

³⁷Federal Writers Project of the Federal Works Agency, North Carolina: A Guide to the Old North State (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1939), p. 539.

³⁸George T. Winchester, A Story of Union County and the History of Pleasant Grove Camp Ground (Mineral Springs, N. C.: George T. Winchester, 1937, p. 50; hereinafter cited as Winchester, Pleasant Grove.

³⁹Winchester, Pleasant Grove, p. 56.

1861; Company B, 26th N. C. Volunteers, organized June. 1861; Company D, 37th N. C. Volunteers, organized September, 1861; Company F, 35th N. C. Volunteers, organized October, 1861; Company B, 48th N. C. Volunteers, organized February, 1862; Company A, 48th N. C. Volunteers, organized March, 1862; Company E, 48th N. C. Volunteers, organized March, 1862; Company E, 48th N. C. Volunteers, organized March, 1862; Company F, 48th N. C. Volunteers, organized March, 1862; Company I, 48th N. C. Volunteers, organized March, 1862; Company I, 53rd N. C. Volunteers, organized March, 1862; Company F, 71st N. C. Volunteers, organized April, 1864.⁴⁰

Union County soldiers participated in many of the more important battles. It seems, however, that there is only one first for Union County: one of its soldiers, William Freezeland, was the first to cross the stone wall on Cemetery Ridge at the Battle of Gettysburg.⁴¹

The extent and degree of Federal (troops) and Confederate (troops) activity in the county is not clearly known. It is believed that no large bodies of Federal troops entered the county or came any closer than Lancaster, South Carolina.⁴² There is some evidence in the form of stories handed down from generation to generation which tends to show that at least one small party of troops did

⁴⁰Redwine, Heritage.

⁴¹Redwine, Heritage.

⁴²Winchester, Pleasant Grove, p. 46; Floyd, Lancaster pp. 13, 19.

enter the southern part of the county.⁴³ There is also some evidence to show that Confederate Major General Joseph Wheeler and his cavalry came up the Potter Road through Union County after a battle with some of Sherman's troops below Lancaster.⁴⁴

The effect of troops, whether Confederate or Federal, was almost the same: devastation. The devastation differed only in degree and intent. Both were living off the land. The Confederates appropriated supplies to the extent of their needs. The Federals appropriated all supplies available and wasted or destroyed what they could not use. Their intent was to cripple the economy of the South.⁴⁵

Civil War damage to the South and to Union County is measured not only in terms of property destroyed, (which in Union County was slight), crops damaged, and fields neglected, but in the death and crippling of soldiers. The number of Union County soldiers crippled is not known. The number of soldiers serving in the Confederate Army from Union County was approximately 1,769. Out of this number about 284 were killed or died during the war from injuries.

⁴³Interviews with (Mrs.) Marvin Starnes, Monroe, N. C., May 14, 1963 and Irby Starnes, Monroe, N. C., May 13, 1963.

⁴⁴Winchester, Pleasant Grove, p. 49.

⁴⁵Harold U. Faulkner, American Political and Social History (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1952), p. 368, 373; Winchester, Pleasant Grove pp. 47, 48, 49.

Union County soldiers died at such places as Fredericksburg, Sharpsburg, Malvern Hill, Gettysburg, Manassas, Cold Harbor, and Chancellorsville.⁴⁶

After the fighting was over the ragged and hungry men walked home from the battlefields to their cheerless homes. They faced the problems of plowing with, in some cases, no horses or mules. This problem was partly solved by hitching the milk cow to the plow. They faced the problem of planting when few seeds were available. Those few available were carefully preserved and utilized.⁴⁷ There was little money in the county for commerce and capital investment. Barter was resorted to, and eventually toward the end of Reconstruction, money for capital investment began to be accumulated by Union County natives and to be invested from the outside.⁴⁸

It is said that an organization of the Ku Klux Klan existed along the South Carolina border, but, because of the limited activity of carpetbaggers and scalawags in the county, it did not gain any importance. The Monroe Enquirer, one of the newspapers published in Monroe which is county-

⁴⁶Clara Laney, Union County Cemeteries, 1710-1914, Roster of Confederate and Revolutionary War Soldiers (Monroe, N. C.: Clara Laney, 1958), pp. 145-182.

⁴⁷Winchester, Pleasant Grove, p. 50.

⁴⁸Stack and Beasley, Sketches, pp. 7, 91.

wide in coverage, was founded in 1872 by W. C. Wolfe and W. J. Boylin. The Seaboard Railroad was extended from Wilmington to Charlotte through Monroe, Wingate, Marshville, and Indian Trail in 1874. The pioneer bank of Monroe, the First National Bank, also came into being in 1874.⁴⁹

After the end of the Reconstruction period educational revival began in Union County, being part of the state wide revival.⁵⁰ Intensive cotton culture spread over the county from the Waxhaw area.⁵¹ The Monroe Journal, occupying a journalistic place in the county similar to that of The Monroe Enquirer, was founded in 1894 by two brothers, G. M. Beasley and R. F. Beasley. In 1890 the Monroe Cotton Mill, the first county industry of considerable magnitude, was established. It was later purchased by local businessmen.⁵²

The present (1963) Courthouse of Union County was constructed in 1886. It is perhaps unique among courthouses in that it is surmounted by a cross, the placement of which

⁴⁹Redwine, Heritage.

⁵⁰See Chapter IV this paper.

⁵¹C. B. Williams and others, "Report on Union County Soils and Agriculture," The Bulletin of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, July, 1917, p. 7; hereinafter cited as Williams, Agriculture.

⁵²Redwine, Heritage.

was attended by some controversy, being opposed by people who thought it sacriligious.⁵³

The twentieth century opened with the growing concern by people within Union County about political and economic events and conditions exterior to the county. In addition there was the beginning of a re-examination of conditions within the county. This period can be characterized as one of great change, with lulls here and there in the progress of the change.

On January 15, 1918 Union County had its coldest weather since 1899.⁵⁴ In the same year Malcom R. Patterson of Tennessee came to Monroe to speak in favor of prohibition.⁵⁵ Emmet Dalton, "a reformed bandit,"⁵⁶ and the sole survivor of the famous Dalton Brothers Gang, came to Monroe to lecture on the unplesantness of a criminal life. A new enterprise called Bearskin Cotton Mill came to the county seat of Union County, Monroe, in 1918.⁵⁷

World War I, or the World War as it was known then, was the focus of attention outside the county. Union

⁵³Sharpe, Manteo.

⁵⁴The Monroe Enquirer, January 15, 1918.

⁵⁵The Monroe Journal, January 8, 1918.

⁵⁶The Monroe Journal, March 8, 1918.

⁵⁷The Monroe Journal, May 28, 1918.

County gave men to serve the country, some to die and some to be wounded. Union County also gave enthusiasm and wholehearted support to the war effort.⁵⁸ From the war Union received an infusion of new ideas. A large number of Union County men had fought on foreign soil with foreign nations against other foreign nations. The men who thus fought were changed not only from combat, but from contact with foreign ideas.

The War had another effect upon Union County. It brought greater prosperity. The added consumption of goods during the war stimulated demand, which in turn stimulated prices and profits. Industry and education were invigorated.⁵⁹

Union County's record in World War I is almost indistinguishable from that of the United States as a whole. In only a few instances can the records be separated. Melvin Deese was the first Union County soldier to be killed.⁶⁰ At least one native of Union County, Samuel L. Parker, received the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery.⁶¹ Union County soldiers were stationed

⁵⁸The Monroe Journal, June 25, 1918 and January 1, 1918.

⁵⁹Redwine, Heritage.

⁶⁰The Monroe Journal, August 27, 1918.

⁶¹The Monroe Enquirer, May 7, 1936.

for training at Camp Jackson, Camp Sevier, Camp Green, and Camp Hancock.⁶² Union County's only flier to serve in the war was R. S. Houston.⁶³

Nearly 900 men from Union County were inducted into the army. They served in the Bickett Battery, a part of the 113th Field Artillery, along with soldiers from Anson County. Union County soldiers also served in the First Corps Artillery Park.⁶⁴

With the end of World War I came readjustment, the recession of the late twenties, and the depression of the thirties. The advances in industry, education, and agriculture (movement from one-crop economy toward self-sufficiency)⁶⁵ were nullified by economic hardship.

Union was primarily an agricultural county. Therefore, the effects of the depression were less severe than they would have been had the people not had their own gardens, had they not to some extent been economically self-sufficient. There may have been some lack of shelter and a scarcity of clothing. There was little scarcity of

⁶²The Monroe Journal, January 25, 1918 and January 29, 1918.

⁶³The Monroe Journal, March 19, 1918.

⁶⁴Redwine, Heritage.

⁶⁵The Monroe Journal, February 22, 1918.

food.

But perhaps the final effects of the depression were good. The people's faith in a one-crop economy was shattered. The need for a diversified economy began to be felt. The need for considerable improvement in education was realized.

In 1936 it was reported that every Works Progress Administration worker had been taught to write at least his name.⁶⁶ The WPA undertook to construct projects such as a school lunch room, golf course, recreation park, sewer extension, an agricultural building in Monroe, and a public library.⁶⁷ Some measure of income security was provided by the National Social Security Act, which went into effect in Union County at the beginning of 1937.⁶⁸ Federal government payments to farmers for soil-improvement practices brought over \$250,000 to the county, putting that much more money in circulation and at the same time improving one of the most important resources of Union, its soil. Ninety-two percent of the farmers were benefitted by this program.⁶⁹

⁶⁶The Monroe Enquirer, June 11, 1936.

⁶⁷The Monroe Enquirer, May 28, 1936.

⁶⁸The Monroe Enquirer, November 12, 1936.

⁶⁹The Monroe Enquirer, October 5, 1936.

The depression was but an interlude. Whereas the self-centeredness of Union County had been partially destroyed by World War I, the self-centeredness recuperated slightly during the depression years. Toward the end of the fourth decade, however, attention was turning again toward international affairs. Mussolini's activities in Africa and Hitler's activities in Europe were receiving attention in local newspapers. The end of the fourth decade marked the approximate termination of localism in Union County. Never again would the interest of Union County people be confined to the county itself or to the United States alone. The county, the state, and the United States were merely parts of the sphere of interest. The sphere of interest was the sphere. People became interested in Europe, Africa, and Asia in addition to their own locality. Undoubtedly, better transportation and communication played a part in this shrinking of the globe for Union County. The world had become smaller for Union County as its field of interest had become larger. The process was to continue through World War II, the beginning of the cold war, the invention of television, the Korean War, and the beginning of Space Age.

Before the United States went into World War II Union County had begun aiding England through "Bundles for

Britain."⁷⁰ Men were being inducted into the armed forces.⁷¹ The Mayor of Monroe and others were trying to get war industries to locate in Monroe.⁷² The home guard was holding drills at the armory in Monroe and also seeking recruits to fill out its ranks.⁷³ Farmers were agreeing, in connection with the "Food and Feed Plan,"⁷⁴ to grow enough food on their farms to be entirely self-sufficient. Farmers went a step further when they agreed to produce milk, meat, eggs, and garden products according to quotas set up by the government.⁷⁵ The stamp plan for the control of cotton acreage and the marketing of cotton was being discussed.⁷⁶

Perhaps the most significant pre-war development was the training of the soldiers through maneuvers held over a large area of which Union County was a part. The war games began in the county in the latter part of 1941.⁷⁷ The maneuvers had a considerable impact on Union County.

⁷⁰The Monroe Enquirer, April 21, 1941.

⁷¹The Monroe Enquirer, March 31, 1941.

⁷²The Monroe Enquirer, April 28, 1941.

⁷³The Monroe Enquirer, February 24, 1941.

⁷⁴The Monroe Enquirer, May 5, 1941.

⁷⁵The Monroe Enquirer, December 15, 1941.

⁷⁶See Footnote 74.

⁷⁷The Monroe Enquirer, September 15, 1941.

The soldiers, from many different parts of the United States, brought with them many different ideas. Some became a part of Union County. Ideas were picked up by the soldiers. A few of the soldiers found wives.

The presence of a large number of soldiers inflated prices by increasing demand for goods and services.⁷⁸ The need for housing for the officers taxed domestic facilities even before the soldiers came. When the soldiers did come the problem was multiplied. Country stores began catering to their new customers. Automatic phonographs were sometimes installed for entertainment. In general, business prosperity came with the soldiers' payroll.

Transportation facilities were taxed. The heavy traffic damaged the roads. Traffic accidents increased in frequency as the number of vehicles grew. Extra patrolmen were assigned to the county. A 35-miles-per-hour speed limit for all vehicles was set up and enforced.⁷⁹

Tanks and half-tracks crashed through woods leveling trees and leaving paths that remained after the tanks had gone. Following the tanks were other military vehicles which helped to define the new roads. Fox holes were dug for mock warfare. Food was cached in holes. The rattle

⁷⁸The Monroe Enquirer, August 21, 1941.

⁷⁹The Monroe Enquirer, November 6, 1941.

of guns firing blank cartridges was frequently heard. They were silenced when the war games ended on November 28, 1941.⁸⁰

The influence and effects of the maneuvers upon Union County were similar to those of Camp Sutton, except there was less soldier-civilian contact at the latter. Camp Sutton was built to the east of Monroe as army barracks. Later it was converted into a veterans hospital.⁸¹ Finally it was completely abandoned by the United States Government and sold.⁸² The boundaries of Monroe were extended to include the property. Industrial and residential development of the area began. Today several Union County industries can be found in the area, along with many businesses, homes, and a hospital.

As in World War I, the part that Union County soldiers played in World War II can not be easily distinguished from the general picture. Perhaps this is as it should be, for World War II gave great additional emphasis to the geographic widening of men's minds. At any rate some Union County men received decorations, some were captured by the enemy, and some died. For example, on May 22, 1945 it was reported

⁸⁰The Monroe Enquirer, December 1, 1941.

⁸¹The Monroe Journal, January 12, 1945.

⁸²The Monroe Journal, November 9, 1945.

that President Truman had pinned the Congressional Medal of Honor on Sergeant Jake W. Lindsey.⁸³ On February 20, 1945 Lieutenant Mack Clark came home on furlough wearing a Silver Star, Soldier's Medal, Purple Heart, and European Theatre Ribbon.⁸⁴ Sergeant Henry E. Lang was reported as being in a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany on January 23, 1945.⁸⁵ Sixty-four names of Union soldiers who had died in World War II were published in a local newspaper on March 5, 1945.⁸⁶ Later, on October 23, 1945, it was stated in the same newspaper that more than 100 Union County soldiers had died in World War II.⁸⁷

During the War the consumption of goods and services in Union County had been considerably increased by the presence of soldiers within the county in connection with the war games and those stationed at Camp Sutton. After the war and after the soldiers had left, it was decided that one of the goods should no longer be available. The county voted against the sale and manufacture of intoxicants on

⁸³The Monroe Journal, May 22, 1945.

⁸⁴The Monroe Journal, January 19, 1945.

⁸⁵The Monroe Journal, January 23, 1945.

⁸⁶The Monroe Journal, March 6, 1945.

⁸⁷The Monroe Journal, October 23, 1945.

February 12, 1949.⁸⁸ Also in 1949 Monroe citizens voted "Against Beer and Wine"⁸⁹ after a vigorous campaign between those for the sale of intoxicants, led by Mayor J. Ray Shute, and those against, led by Reverend J. A. Hudson.⁹⁰ The Monroe "wets" made another attempt in 1955 to legalize the sale of intoxicants in Monroe. They asked for, however, only half as much as they had before. This time they advocated only that the sale of beer be legalized. They were unsuccessful.⁹¹

Two trends were developing in 1949: emphasis upon forestry and the hard-surfacing of roads. An example of the growing emphasis upon forestry in the county was the ordering of 10,000 pine seedlings by Van Secrest.⁹² In connection with roads it was announced that Union was going to get 140 additional miles of its roads hard-surfaced.⁹³

What may have been the first county advertisement

⁸⁸The Monroe Journal, February 15, 1949.

⁸⁹The Monroe Journal, September 27, 1949.

⁹⁰The Monroe Journal, August 12, 1949.

⁹¹The Monroe Journal, October 11, 1955.

⁹²The Monroe Journal, December 20, 1949

⁹³See footnote 90.

of television sets appeared in May of 1949.⁹⁴ The introduction of television into the county gave the people visual, moving contact with the outside world in addition to vocal contact which was already present. Localism was further diminished. By the introduction of television people were better able to perceive the course of events in the Korean War of 1950-51. Just prior to the War Union County consciousness of the Communist menace was expressed in articles in the local newspapers in 1959.⁹⁵

During the same year the pattern of future educational development was pointed out by the recommendations of the Peabody Report, a report on the educational needs of the county. The Report suggested the division of the county into four school districts, each district to have one high school and the necessary elementary schools. This arrangement did not apply to the Negroes. For them it was suggested that there be one school district.⁹⁶

In 1959 67.5 per cent of the non-white farm operators in Union County were tenants. The tenancy rate for all farm operators was 28.8 per cent. For whites it was 20.3

⁹⁴The Monroe Journal, May 31, 1949.

⁹⁵For example, see The Monroe Journal, July 26, 1949.

⁹⁶The Monroe Journal, May 17, 1949; Public Education in Union County (Nashville, Tennessee: Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1949), pp. 16-18.

per cent.⁹⁷ These data tend to show that the relative economic position of the Negro (of whom the non-white group was primarily composed) was inferior to that of whites in the area of farming. It can be assumed that this was true for other occupations.

Despite the probable inferior economic position of the Negro, relations between white and Negro were relatively harmonious until the summer of 1957. At that time Robert F. Williams, local president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Dr. A. E. Perry, and eight other Negroes tried to gain admittance to the municipal swimming pool. They were not admitted. Relations between the races worsened. Feeling ran high among extremists on both sides.⁹⁸ But after some time had passed tension began to lessen.

Union County was catapulted into national attention after two Negro boys, James Hanover Thompson and David Simpson, ages nine and eight respectively, were accused, tried, and convicted of assault upon three white

⁹⁷U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "North Carolina Counties," United States Census of Agriculture, 1959; hereinafter cited as 1959 Ag. Census.

⁹⁸George L. Weisman, "The Kissing Case," The Nation, January 17, 1959, p. 46-49; hereinafter cited as Weisman, Kissing.

females, who were ages six and seven. After being convicted the boys were sentenced to reform school. Their alleged offense, specifically, was requiring the three girls to pay a kiss as the price for getting out of a culvert ditch. Two of the girls got out without kissing. One did kiss Hanover Thompson.⁹⁹

It was felt by some whites¹⁰⁰ from other parts of the United States that the case was simply an example of extreme racial prejudice in operation. It was further maintained by one writer¹⁰¹ that all the people of the county supported and applauded the conviction of the boys. It is this writer's opinion that, while such an appraisal of the county may be partly true for extremists among the whites, it in itself is an example of prejudice--prejudice against the South. Union County should not be painted black because one incident is said to show that racial injustice has been committed.

Unfortunately, actions by moderates is seldom considered newsworthy. So it was that both Negro and white racial extremists received attention when, on August 29, 1961,

⁹⁹Weisman, Kissing.

¹⁰⁰Weisman, Kissing.

¹⁰¹Weisman, Kissing.

it was reported that "33 were Indited [sic] During [a] Race Riot [last] Sunday."¹⁰² Among those indicted was Robert F. Williams. He and two other Negroes were charged with kidnapping two whites, G. Bruce Stegall and his wife. In an eloquent statement the circuit judge then in Monroe said that order was maintained in society by observance of laws, that remedies should be sought within the law, and that all rights could be protected within the provisions of the State and Federal Constitutions.¹⁰³ Robert F. Williams fled from Monroe, whereupon a "wanted" poster was issued for his arrest by the United States Justice Department¹⁰⁴ when it was assumed that he had crossed the state line. Eventually, Williams's voice was heard over Cuban radio directing pro-Castro propaganda toward the United States.

In 1963 Union County was moving slowly toward better relations between the races. Moderates on both sides were working quietly.¹⁰⁵ The Union County Library was integrated without trouble. But this writer believes that integration,

¹⁰²The Monroe Journal, August 29, 1961

¹⁰³Weisman, Kissing.

¹⁰⁴Wanted poster issued by U. S. Justice Department in quest of Robert F. Williams, recently (May, 1963) was still posted in Union County Courthouse.

¹⁰⁵Interview with George M. Beasley, Jr., editor of The Monroe Journal on June 5, 1963.

prejudice, and depressed economic and social conditions are not physical things that can be changed by a court order, or picketing, or violence. Those things are mental. The minds of men must be changed before such things can be. For this, time is a necessary ingredient. Social changes do not occur in one day, one week, or one year. Another ingredient is patience on the part of both races. The Negro must recognize the fact that his conditions will not change quickly. Rash, overbearing actions will gain nothing but derision and notoriety. Calm, sensible actions and responsible citizenship will earn respect. The whites must be tolerant of the Negro's efforts to improve his lot and of the Negro himself. To deny the Negro opportunity in a land which is said to be the land of opportunity is inconsistent with what most people of the United States presumably believe.

Union County in 1963 was at the threshold of a new era in social relations. It was becoming more industrialized. Farming was moving toward greater diversification of products.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION

The pattern of educational development in Union County has not been dissimilar from that in other areas of North Carolina. Probably the very first education was in the home, then in the churches, then in one-room, one-teacher schools, and in academies, and finally in the modern, consolidated schools of today.

The area of the Waxhaws, being the earliest center of population, was also the earliest center of education. It was populated by Presbyterians who quickly established schools wherever they settled.¹⁰⁶ According to Redwine the Waxhaw Presbyterian Church, which is just over the state boundary in South Carolina and which served the Waxhaw area in North Carolina and South Carolina, was used for church services on Sunday and as a school on weekdays.¹⁰⁷ Sharpe says that a Latin School opened by Alexander Craighead in the Waxhaw Church was probably the first to serve the Union County area. To this school came some of the youngsters of

¹⁰⁶Bill Sharpe, "In Union There is Strength," The State, December 1, 1956, p. 27; hereinafter cited as Sharpe, Strength.

¹⁰⁷Redwine, Heritage.

the Waxhaw settlement who were destined for later fame.¹⁰⁸

In other areas of the territory which was to be Union County, not served by the school at Waxhaw, instruction was in the home and by the parent or parents.¹⁰⁹

In 1860 the first county public school was established.¹¹⁰ Probably before, during and certainly after this date academies were being established at various places.

The Monroe Academy, presided over by S. S. McCauley, was mentioned in the North Carolina Business Directory for 1869.¹¹¹ By 1872 two academies and one seminary for girls were operating in Monroe.¹¹² G. H. Mebane, discussing some of the older schools in the county, said that Monroe High School had as its principal in 1878 J. D. Hodges. He said that in the same year the Grove Spring Academy at Griffinville was in operation.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸Sharpe, Strength.

¹⁰⁹Redwine, Heritage.

¹¹⁰Sharpe, Strength.

¹¹¹L. Branson (ed.), North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: J. A. Jones, 1869), p. 151; hereinafter cited as Branson, 1869 Directory.

¹¹²L. Branson (ed.), North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: J. A. Jones, 1872), p. 218; hereinafter cited as Branson, 1872 Directory.

¹¹³C. H. Mebane, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina (Raleigh: Guy V. Barnes, 1898), p. 702.

George T. Winchester, writing in 1937, related some of his school experiences at the Pleasant Grove School. He attended the school in or around 1876. The school building was of the one-room type and not ceiled, consequently, it was quite chilly in the winter. The motto was "Spell right or get licked." The subjects taught, in addition to spelling, were reading, arithmetic, and writing.¹¹⁴

Two events of importance took place in 1885. One was the founding of an influential private school. The other was the organization of the first Union County Board of Education. One of the most significant contributions to the education of the people of Union County and surrounding areas was made by the Union Institute. Oliver Clark Hamilton founded this private school. He had emigrated from Randolph County where another school by the same name, later Trinity College and even later Duke University, had been in operation. Hamilton was reputed to have been one of the best teachers to have taught in Union County. His school offered high school and junior college work for twenty-six years. Hundreds of boys and girls from various parts of North Carolina and South Carolina were educated at this school about eight miles north of Monroe in Goose Creek Township.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴Winchester, Pleasant Grove.

¹¹⁵Sharpe, Manteo.

In the year 1885, when there were seventy public schools, an act of the North Carolina General Assembly on March 11 authorized the formation of a board of education for Union County. On July 6 the first County Board of Education was organized. The members of the first Board were W. H. Fitzgerald, A. F. Stevens, A. J. Price, and J. B. Ashcraft. The Board selected J. B. Ashcraft as the first Superintendent of Union County Schools. W. H. Fitzgerald was elected the first Chairman of the Union County Board of Education.¹¹⁶

The growth of education, public and private, continued gradually. An 1887 listing of schools showed three private schools, one academy, and one Negro school in Monroe and an academy in Beaver Dam (later called Marshville). The number of public schools was seventy-nine, sixty-two for whites and seventeen for Negroes.¹¹⁷

By 1902 two citizens of Union County maintained that

The rapid advancement of the cause of education in the county for the past twelve or fifteen years has been marvelous. The educational revival in this county is far ahead of has advanced faster than the general one in the State.

¹¹⁶Dan S. Davis, "Union County Education," Union County, North Carolina, 1842-1953 (undated pamphlet published by Cory Press of Monroe, N. C.); hereinafter cited as Davis, Education.

¹¹⁷L. Branson (ed.), North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: L. Branson, 1887), p. 624; hereinafter cited as Branson, 1887 Directory.

Perhaps more boys and girls go to college from this county in proportion to population than from any other in the State. This is due to the presence of a large number of high schools. The academies at Marshville, Wingate, Waxhaw, Unionville, Weddington, and Morgon are fine feeders, besides shedding an influence for progress upon the communities in which they are located. Six of the nine townships of the county have each one or more academies, and in another there has been an excellent one, while in another of these some of the public schools run from eight to ten months in the year. At the county seat, Monroe, there is a splendid graded school system for both white and colored. At Wesley Chapel, in Sandy Ridge township, the people have voted a special tax, erected a \$1500 house, and will maintain a rural graded school--the first in the State.¹¹⁸

Marshville and Waxhaw were also considering whether to establish graded schools. The schools were in addition to those already provided. Several free libraries were located in the county.

But the increase in the number of schools did not occur without attendant problems. R. F. Beasley, County Superintendent from 1903 to 1907, wrote in 1950 that

. . . within the memory of living people our schools were pretty lame institutions. The first map of Union county [sic] showed the districts laid off in squares, the sides of which were two miles long. It was presumed that a school house should stand in the center of each district. That was the area of the thought of a red school house on every hill top. But we never had that many school houses. I would say that in nineteen hundred we had sixty or seventy white schools in the county and twenty-odd colored schools. There was not a two room house among them. Some were so far apart that the children trudged many miles to them, and some were so near together you could see one from the other. Then

¹¹⁸Stack and Beasley, Sketches.

schools were located where two or more influential people got together and said there should be a district and usually they marched out and built the school house.¹¹⁹

By 1921 there were ninety-eight schools. A consolidation movement began about 1921 which resulted in the combining of many of the smaller districts. During the decades since then, the program of school consolidation in Union has continued. In 1954 there were sixteen schools for whites in thirteen districts. Prior to 1954 the number of Negro schools had reached fifty-three; by 1954 there were only thirteen schools located in nine districts.¹²⁰

Shortly after 1954 the final step in consolidation began. First, public opinion was enlisted. Then an election was held in which the people indicated that they wanted further consolidation by voting for the issuing of bonds to finance the building of four rural high schools and one city high school, the latter to be located in Monroe. The bonds were sold, and construction of the schools began.

By the school year 1960-61 three consolidated high schools for white students had been constructed and were occupied, one in Monroe and two in the county. Five combination high and elementary schools and ten elementary

¹¹⁹R. F. Beasley, "Looking Back on School History of Union County," The Monroe Journal, January 27, 1950.

¹²⁰Davis, Education.

schools were still in operation.¹²¹

The consolidation of the Negro schools started earlier than that for white schools and was therefore completed first. By 1960-61 there were three Negro schools in the county and one in the city of Monroe. One of the county schools was located in the eastern part of the county, the other in the western part. Both were combination elementary and high schools, the same being true for the single Negro school in Monroe. The third school was in the south-central part of the county and had two teachers who taught grades one through seven.¹²² The number of Negro schools had not changed by 1963.¹²³ The consolidation of the high schools for whites continued until in 1963 the county had four and Monroe had one.¹²⁴

An interview with County Superintendent Dan S. Davis, who took office in 1949, disclosed that consolidation greatly benefited education in the county, the high schools directly,

¹²¹Union County Office of Education, Union County School Directory (compiled and mimeographed by the office staff of the Union County, N. C. Superintendent of Education for the 1960-1961 school year), p. 1-7 and p. 1-2 in section "Negro Schools;" hereinafter cited as County Directory.

¹²²County Directory.

¹²³Interview with Dan S. Davis, Monroe, N. C., April 16, 1963; hereinafter cited as Davis, Schools.

¹²⁴Davis, Schools.

the elementary schools indirectly.¹²⁵

The elementary schools were helped by removing them from the noises of the high schools; high school interruptions could not affect the elementary schools, neither could high school discipline problems. The high schools were helped in several ways. They (the consolidated high schools) seemed to have greater holding power; drop-outs seemed to be less. The teachers did better work because they could teach in their fields of specialization. Equipment was better. Instruction was provided in shop, science, home economics, and languages. The buildings themselves were new, well-lighted, sanitary, modern, and convenient. The North Carolina Department of Public Instructions accredited all of the new high schools. With 118 buses in the county, transportation did not constitute a serious problem, although some routes were slightly longer than desirable. The general education situation in Union County was described as being better than the average for counties in North Carolina.¹²⁶

WINGATE COLLEGE

Wingate College is located in the town of Wingate

¹²⁵Davis, Schools.

¹²⁶Davis, Schools.

seven miles east of Monroe.¹²⁷ It was established in 1896 as a high school by the Union Baptist Association. The Legislature of 1897, by a charter, granted to the school "all the protection and privileges usually granted to a college."¹²⁸ The Baptist State Convention took over the school in 1923, and it was organized as a junior college. In 1930 the Baptist State Convention surrendered control of Wingate College to regional Baptist associations. In 1939, Wingate again came under support of the State Baptist Convention. By 1951 the college had been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.¹²⁹

At first the school was located in a three-room building with M. B. Dry as the principal.¹³⁰ Growth was slow but steady. C. M. Beach was the first president of the institution after it became a college.¹³¹

Wingate College had a great year of growth in 1948 under the leadership of Dr. C. C. Burris. Several projects were completed: a men's fireproof dormitory, a library,

¹²⁷Sharpe, Strength, p. 26.

¹²⁸The Piedmont Postscript, May, 1948, p. 23; hereinafter cited as Postscript with date.

¹²⁹Sharpe, Strength.

¹³⁰Sharpe, Strength.

¹³¹Postscript, June, 1948, p. 25.

three apartment buildings containing eighteen completely furnished apartments, and barracks for thirty-five male students. The last two items were built as part of an \$80,000 project by the Federal government. The library was built as a result of a gift by the Ebird merchandising family.¹³²

The expansion in enrollment, buildings, and study facilities was continued by Dr. Budd E. Smith, who took office as president in 1953. A new library was constructed and the old library was converted into offices; additional books were purchased. New dormitories were built for men and women. For sports a swimming pool, tennis courts, an athletic field and field house, and a physical education plant were added. An auditorium, heating plant, student center, post office and bookstore, infirmary, housing for faculty, and additional parking areas have been provided. The language laboratory is said to be one of the best in the state.¹³³

¹³²Postscript, May, 1948, p. 19.

¹³³Union County Industrial Development Commission, Visit Monroe--Union County (undated brochure published by Industrial Commission), p. 5; hereinafter cited as Visit Union.

The college offers two years of work toward most bachelors degrees and terminal business programs in several areas. As a result of its range of course offerings and its program of expansion, Wingate's enrollment increased from 192 in 1953 to 966 in 1962. Wingate College has a definite place in higher education in Union County; in 1962 more students attended Wingate from Union County than any other county in North Carolina with the exception of Mecklenburg, which is considerably more populous.¹³⁴

¹³⁴Wingate College Annual Catalogue, 1962-63, p. 19,
18.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION

The history of religion in Union County is primarily centered around Protestantism. Three denominations are outstanding numerically: Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian. "All principal Protestant denominations and the Catholic Faith are represented in the City or county."¹³⁵ The following discussion centers chiefly around the three above named denominations which are numerically most important.

The Scotch-Irish are identified with Presbyterianism in Union County. The influx of these settlers around the middle of the eighteenth century brought with it the Presbyterian faith. The mother church of Presbyterianism in Union County was built shortly thereafter in Lancaster County, South Carolina, just a short distance from the border between the present counties of Union and Lancaster. This church flourished, contributing much spiritually and educationally to both North and South Carolina. From this church the Presbyterian faith spread into what was to become Union County.¹³⁶

¹³⁵Visit Union.

¹³⁶Waxhaw Presbyterian Church Bulletin, Lancaster County, S. C., July 24, 1955; hereinafter cited as Bulletin.

Since the Waxhaw Presbyterian Church was such an integral part of Union County its history is partly Union County history. The first recorded sermon in the area was preached by John Brown, a young probationer from Pennsylvania, in 1753. Robert Miller, a Scotch schoolmaster, was called as minister, whereupon he and his wife gave the Waxhaw congregation a title for church property in 1758.¹³⁷ In 1759 the Reverend William Richardson became pastor. He was very influential in spreading Presbyterianism throughout the Piedmont of the Carolinas. He died and was buried in the church cemetery in 1771.¹³⁸

The first church building was used as a hospital during the Revolutionary War; after a skirmish there in 1781, it was burned by the British. Shortly after the Great Revival of 1802 the next building was accidentally burned. The third building was used from 1808 until 1896 when the present building was constructed.¹³⁹

It is said that in this church's schoolhouse the first classics were taught in the Piedmont of the Carolinas. The singing of hymns instead of psalms was introduced. Here the Presbytery of South Carolina held its first meeting.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷Bulletin.

¹³⁸Bulletin.

¹³⁹Bulletin.

¹⁴⁰Bulletin.

Tirzah Presbyterian Church is perhaps the oldest Presbyterian church within Union County itself. It is located in Jackson Township, about sixteen miles southwest of Monroe and one mile away from North Carolina Highway 200 between Monroe and Lancaster. It was organized in 1804, but services were held in the homes of members until a log building could be erected. Another building was erected in 1835 and remodeled in 1892. In 1955 a new building was begun and was shortly completed. The Tirzah Bible Society was organized in 1857 and has held yearly meetings since then. Many ancestors of Union County people are buried in the Tirzah Cemetery.¹⁴¹

Presbyterians, while originally most numerous in the area, lost their numerical superiority with the coming of Methodist and Baptist missionaries and settlers to the area.

A Primitive Baptist church claims to be the oldest in the county. High Hill Primitive Baptist Church was unofficially in existence by 1774, but did not keep records for fear they would fall into the hands of the Church of England, which was then the state church of the colonies and, therefore, had the power to persecute other religious

¹⁴¹Fred L. Wolfe, "Remiscences," The Monroe Enquirer, February 2, 1956.

bodies. The church was officially organized in 1784.¹⁴²

Its congregation was made up of people who came from the Welsh Neck section of the Pee Dee River near Society Hill, South Carolina. Some of the people in the Welsh Neck section had in turn come from the Welsh Tract in Pennsylvania, later located by a boundary change in the Delaware. The settlers of the Welsh Tract had come from Wales.¹⁴³

The original church building was constructed in 1774. Another building was erected in 1842 and lasted from then until 1962, when a new building was completed.¹⁴⁴ The year 1827 brought division among the Baptists of North Carolina.¹⁴⁵ Some churches became Missionary Baptist. Others, like High Hill, wished to retain the old doctrines and thus were known as Primitive Baptist.¹⁴⁶

At least four other churches in Union County were organized from this one.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴²"High Hill Primitive Baptists Soon to Occupy New Building," The Monroe Enquirer, June 4, 1962; hereinafter cited as Primitive Baptist.

¹⁴³Primitive Baptists.

¹⁴⁴Primitive Baptists.

¹⁴⁵Encyclopedia Americana (Chicago: Americana Corporation, 1956), Vol. III, p. 222.

¹⁴⁶Primitive Baptists.

¹⁴⁷Primitive Baptists.

Most of the other Baptist Churches, Missionary or Primitive, have a history which is similar to that of High Hill. Some Baptists came from South Carolina. Baptists also came to Union County from Chatham County North Carolina.¹⁴⁸

Daniel Marshall was an early Baptist missionary in the Union County area whose activities resulted in the establishment of churches in the northern and southeastern parts of the county.¹⁴⁹ W. C. Owen preached in the Waxhaw area, and his preaching resulted in the founding of the Waxhaw Baptist (Round Top) Church in 1830.¹⁵⁰

The Pleasant Grove Camp Ground and Church are two of the older features of Methodism in the county. The Pleasant Grove Camp Ground is a descendent of an earlier camp ground, McWhorters, which was established in 1787.¹⁵¹ The first revival meeting was held in October of 1829. Meetings have been held yearly from then until the present, with the exception of a period from 1902 to 1912 or 1913.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸Charles J. Black, A History of the Brown Creek Union Baptist Association (Nashville: Marshall and Bruce Company, 1919, pp. 7-14; hereinafter cited as Black, Baptists.

¹⁴⁹Black, Baptists, p. 9.

¹⁵⁰Roy Covington, "No Place for the Devil to Hide," The Charlotte Observer, December 31, 1956.

¹⁵¹Sharpe, Strength, p. 28.

¹⁵²Winchester, Pleasant Grove, p. 10, 6.

Other Methodist churches and other churches of other denominations were first camp grounds for revivals, perhaps meeting under a brush arbor, and then were later formally organized as churches. Usually a missionary or missionaries played an important part in the founding of the churches. An example is David Philemon who in 1817 organized the meeting place to be known as Prospect (for a time Mt. Prospect) Methodist Church.¹⁵³

Some idea of the early growth of denominations and the appearance of churches can be gained by consulting the North Carolina Business Directory for the years 1869, 1872, 1887, and 1896.

In 1869 six Baptist churches, Black Jack, Olive Branch, Monroe, Meadow Branch, Philadelphia and Waxhaw, were listed. There were also six Methodist churches; Bethesda, Maple Springs, Mt. Horiah, Monroe, Philadelphia, and Smyrna, were listed.¹⁵⁴ Turner Presbyterian Church and High Hill Primitive Baptist Church were not listed. By 1872 Pleasant Grove, Prospect, and Mill Grove Methodist Churches were listed. Bethlehem Presbyterian and Emanuel Lutheran Churches also appeared.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³Inscription on ornamental plate.

¹⁵⁴Branson, 1869 Directory, p. 151.

¹⁵⁵Branson, 1872 Directory, pp. 217-219.

In 1887 the number of Methodist churches listed had increased by ten: Bethel, Shiloh, Centre, Oak Grove, Zion, Gilboa, Rohobeth, Wesley's Chapel, Sandy Ridge, and Trinity. Judging from the listing the Methodists engaged in a great deal of missionary (or evangelical) activities prior to 1887. There was at least one additional Baptist church, Shiloh, and possibly another, Jerusalem.¹⁵⁶

One additional Methodist church, Union, was listed in 1896. Three new Methodist Protestant churches were mentioned: Antioch, Ebenezer, and Tabernacle. Bethel and Marshville Baptist churches had not been listed before. Waxhaw and Monroe Presbyterian churches were added to the list. So was St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Monroe. Finally there were the Coburn's Store, Waxhaw, Mt. Calvary, and Union Springs A. M. E. Zion churches.¹⁵⁷ Between 1896 and 1963 many new churches were formed. New denominations came in. The sizes of churches increased with population increases.

Union County is one of the few places in the world where True Light churches are to be found. True Light churches are different from most other Protestant denomina-

¹⁵⁶Branson, 1887 Directory pp. 622-628.

¹⁵⁷L. Branson (ed.), North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: L. Branson, 1896), pp. 593-600.

tions in that there is no professional ministry; outstanding members preach. No money offerings are ordinarily taken.¹⁵⁸

In addition to the True Light churches, there are several other denominations, among these are Church of God and Holiness. There are two Catholic churches in Union County.

Approximate figures can be given for the number of members in each of the major Protestant denominations. The 1962 membership of Baptist churches was slightly less than fourteen thousand.¹⁵⁹ For the same year the number of Methodists was around seven thousand.¹⁶⁰ The number of Presbyterians was slightly more than two thousand.¹⁶¹ These figures do not include Negroes.

The Negroes of the county during slave times attended the churches of their masters. After the freeing of the slaves many continued in the denominations of their former masters but did not attend the same churches. As time passed other denominations gained members among Negroes.

¹⁵⁸Interview with Kenneth Cox, Waxhaw, N. C., July 22, 1963.

¹⁵⁹Union Baptist Associational Minutes, 1962.

¹⁶⁰Charles D. White (ed.), Journal of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, 1962, pp. 276-278.

¹⁶¹"Presbytery's Statistical Report to the General Assembly for the Year 1962," Minutes of the Mecklenburg Presbytery, January 22, 1963.

In 1963 Negroes belonged to Baptist, Holiness, African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A. M. E. Zion), Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (C. M. E.), Presbyterian, and Catholic churches,¹⁶² and perhaps others.

¹⁶²James E. Chambers, "Negro Church News," The Monroe Enquirer, June 6, 1963.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICS AS REPRESENTED BY GUBERNATORIAL

AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Since the founding of Union County more than half the people have usually supported the Democratic Party by their votes. This has been true of both state elections for the governor and national elections for president. Shortly after the founding of this county in 1842 the Whig Party was the minority party. Later the Whig Party faded away and was replaced in importance in national elections by the Republican Party. In the state elections for governor the Republican Party failed to gain support until after 1865 when the Civil War ended. One of the important effects of Reconstruction upon the county was political. It cemented the Democratic Party into place as the party the majority of people would belong to and vote for with few exceptions thereafter. Since the elections of 1896, Union has never failed to give most Democratic candidates a plurality of votes in elections. The history of politics, party alignment, and voting in Union County is simply a series of variations upon the theme as outlined in this paragraph. Next, particular election results can be looked at.

In 1848, the Presidential election was between a

Whig, Zachary Taylor, and a Democrat, Lewis M. Cass. Union favored the Democrat by a vote of 945 to 775. But the nation favored and elected Taylor.¹⁶³

In 1856 the opposition (which, of course, lost) was called the American Party.¹⁶⁴ For governor in 1858 the Democratic candidate was heavily favored. Out of a total of 1,133 votes Thomas Bragg, the Democrat, received 824.

By the gubernatorial election of 1860 Whigs and Democrats were still contending against each other. Union votes helped bring about Democratic victory. More than twice as many people voted for Democratic candidates as voted for Whig candidates.¹⁶⁵

The Presidential election of 1860 gleaned no Republican votes from Union. Perhaps it was located too near South Carolina. Votes were divided between Breckinridge, a Democrat, and Bell, a Whig. Union approved Breckinridge by 858 to 379.¹⁶⁶

Surprisingly, Republican U. S. Grant received only

¹⁶³North Carolina Historical Commission, North Carolina Manual (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1913), p. 986; hereinafter cited as Manual, 1913.

¹⁶⁴Manual, 1913, p. 998.

¹⁶⁵Manual, 1913, p. 1000.

¹⁶⁶Manual, 1913, p. 986.

119 fewer votes than Democratic Horatio Seymour in the election of 1868. This was out of a total of 1,741 votes cast. Perhaps this was due to Grant's popularity as a war leader. Perhaps it was also because the bitterness of Reconstruction had not yet been elicited.¹⁶⁷ In the gubernatorial election of 1868 Union actually gave a tiny majority to a Republican.¹⁶⁸ By 1876, however, Democrats who had been disenfranchised in the previous election gained enough strength to trounce the Republicans by a two-to-one vote in the Presidential election of that year.

The gubernatorial and Presidential elections of 1876 saw the Democratic votes slightly more than twice the Republican votes. The elections of 1880 saw the Republicans gain in strength but still lose. The trend, if there was one, in 1880 was completely reversed by the elections of 1884. The Democratic vote was about triple the Republican vote. When the elections of 1888 came the Republican candidates collected about one-half as many votes as the Democratic candidates.¹⁶⁹

The Populist Party was stronger than the Republican

¹⁶⁷Manual, 1913, p. 988.

¹⁶⁸Manual, 1913, p. 1002.

¹⁶⁹Manual, 1913, pp. 988, 990 (Presidents), and 1002, 1004 (Governors).

in 1892. Four parties, Democrat, Republican, Populist, Prohibitionist, presented candidates for governor. They received 1,827, 475, 851, and six votes respectively.¹⁷⁰ The Democratic, Republican, and Populist parties also offered candidates for President. They obtained 1,798, 573, and 828 votes respectively. In 1896 the Republican Presidential candidate was given nearly three times as many votes as the Democratic candidate. Such an unprecedented result was not destined to be repeated.¹⁷¹ For governor one more party, the Populist, offered a candidate. In the gubernatorial election the Republican Party was favored by 1,001 people, the Democratic Party by 1,784 people and the Populist Party by 988 people.¹⁷²

Another shift came in 1900. Or it might be said that things returned to normal. For in that year the Democratic Party was decisively back in power. The Presidential election majority was approximately two-to-one.¹⁷³ The gubernatorial ratio was about four to one, even more decisive.¹⁷⁴ Only the two parties ran candidates. In the

¹⁷⁰Manual, 1913, p. 1006.

¹⁷¹Manual, 1913, p. 990.

¹⁷²Manual, 1913, p. 1006.

¹⁷³Manual, 1913, p. 992.

¹⁷⁴Manual, 1913, p. 1006.

gubernatorial election of 1900 the fusion movement, combining the Populist and Republican Parties, apparently had little influence.

The years 1904 and 1908 were years of extremely light voting in both elections. The total vote for both candidates for both offices in 1904 was less than the total Democratic votes in the previous election. The total number of votes in 1908 increased over the number in the previous election year, but in the case of the governor's election it was still less than in 1900.

The Bull Moose Party broke upon the scene in 1912. The governor's election and the President's election brought out Progressive candidates who polled fewer than the Democrats but more than the Republicans. Some of the voters were evidently confused about whom to vote for, because the total number of votes cast in each election was less than it had been in previous years.¹⁷⁵

Four presidential candidates competed in 1916. They came from Democratic, Republican, Socialist, and Prohibition Parties. No voters favored "drying up" things enough to vote Prohibition. Four voters thought Socialism was the answer. Most voters, however, followed the "ways of their

¹⁷⁵Manual, 1913, p. 1008, 992.

fathers" and voted Democratic.¹⁷⁶

Hoover came within 392 votes of Smith in the race for the President in 1928. The votes were 2,840 for Smith and 2,448 for Hoover.¹⁷⁷ The votes for governor were not nearly as close. The ratio was more than two-to-one.

Voters of the United States¹⁷⁸ turned against Hoover when the international depression of the thirties came to the United States. Voters of Union County did likewise. Union County gave Roosevelt 6,103 votes as compared with 710 votes for Hoover in the election of 1932. Roosevelt's popularity was even greater in 1936, as is shown by his receiving 7,480 votes to Landon's 601.¹⁷⁹ There was a slight decline in Roosevelt's popularity by 1940. He received fewer votes than in 1936; the Republicans received more. In addition 268 fewer votes were cast. In the Presidential election of 1944 when Roosevelt ran for his fourth term about a thousand fewer votes were cast than in

¹⁷⁶R. B. House (ed.), North Carolina Manual (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1925), p. 361 (Presidents); hereinafter cited as Manual, 1925.

¹⁷⁷Manual, 1925, p. 361.

¹⁷⁸Manual, 1925, p. 366.

¹⁷⁹H. M. London (ed.), North Carolina Manual (Durham: Christian Printing Company, 1939), p. 94; hereinafter cited as Manual, 1939.

1940, 1,238 fewer than in 1936 and twenty-seven votes fewer than in 1932. Roosevelt's votes in 1944 were 5,729 while Dewey for the Republicans collected 1,114 votes. It is apparent that many voters did not want to vote for Roosevelt in 1944 and abstained from voting for either candidate. Others decided to vote Republican.¹⁸⁰

Meanwhile Democratic candidates for governor were receiving comfortable majorities.¹⁸¹

Political interest ebbed and reached a low point in 1948. There were three candidates for state governor, Kerr Scott, George M. Pritchard, and Mary Price, belonging to the Democratic, Republican, and Progressive parties, respectively. For President these three and the States' Rights Party were represented. Truman, a Democrat, was most favored of the Presidential candidates. Strom Thurmond, States' Rights was second. Dewey, Republican, was third. Wallace, Progressive, was fourth. Perhaps the multiplicity of candidates made a choice difficult--even impossible for some. At any rate there was a great reduction in the total number of votes. The total number of votes for Presidential candidates

¹⁸⁰Thad Eure (issued by), North Carolina Manual (Winston-Salem: Salem Printing Company, 1955), p. 210; hereinafter cited as Manual, 1955.

¹⁸¹Manual, 1955, p. 215.

was only 5,144, whereas 8,081 had been cast in 1936.

But in 1952 interest was apparently revived and the choices were clear-cut. Gubernatorial votes were four-to-one for the Democrats. Presidential votes also favored the Democrats but in a two-to-one ratio. The total number of votes reached a new peak. A total of 11,206 votes was cast in the Presidential election, while 10,381 votes were cast in the race for governor.¹⁸²

Political interest declined 1,461 votes in the national election and 914 votes in the state election from 1952 to 1956. Most of the decline was in Democratic votes. Still, Democrats were given by far the greater number.¹⁸³

Judging from the number of votes, interest in the election of 1960 was a little greater than normal. In the Presidential race Kennedy, Democrat, was the choice of 7,393 voters. Nixon, Republican, was the choice of 4,030 voters. In the gubernatorial election, Terry Sanford, Democrat, outpolled Kennedy in Union County when he received 7,670 votes to Robert L. Gavin's 3,610 votes. The county gave eighteen write-in votes to I. Beverly Lake

¹⁸²Manual, 1955, pp. 210, 215.

¹⁸³Thad Eure (issued by), North Carolina Manual (New Bern: Owen G. Dunn, 1959), p. 240, 245.

who, as a strong segregationist, had been beaten by Sanford in the Democratic Primary.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴John L. Sanders, Data on North Carolina Congressional Districts, State Senatorial Districts, and Apportionment of the State House of Representatives (Chapel Hill: Institute of Government, University of North Carolina, 1961), p. 266.

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE

The beginning of Union County agriculture is found around the year 1750. Since that time agriculture has passed through four different stages. The first stage was marked by self-sufficient farming wherein most of the requirements for the farm and family were produced by the farm itself. The second stage through which agriculture passed was characterized by the commercial production of livestock and small grain. The third stage could be called the cotton period. It was marked by the predominance of cotton as a money crop, by the plantation-slave system--chiefly in the western part of the county--and the tenant farmer system over most of the county after the Civil War.¹⁸⁵ The fourth stage has experienced the increasing importance of livestock and poultry, lessening dependence upon the cotton crop as a source of income, considerable mechanization, diversification of crops, a growing number of part-time farmers who work at another job in a business of some kind and farm in their spare time, and widespread use of soil conservation and improvement practices.

During the first and second stages, approximately, the

¹⁸⁵Williams, Agriculture, p. 7.

principal marketing centers for people in the Union County area were Charlotte and Fayetteville in North Carolina and Camden, Cheraw, and Charleston in South Carolina. Since trips to these places were measured in days or weeks (two weeks to Charleston) they were not made often. Small quantities of surplus cotton, tobacco, beef, bacon, hides, tallow, dried fruit, and flour were carried to the markets.¹⁸⁶

Extensive cotton culture began around 1800 in the western part of the area where Jackson and Sandy Ridge Townships now are located. After the Civil War it spread to the eastern part of the county.

Around 1820 tobacco was grown commercially in the northern part of the area by German farmers. They rolled it to the Fayetteville market in hogsheads. Tobacco growing reached one of its peaks in 1870 when 8,262 pounds were produced.¹⁸⁷ Another peak was reached in 1930 when the crop amounted to 72,800 (estimated) pounds from 104 acres.¹⁸⁸

Wheat was an important crop from 1820 to 1830 when the

¹⁸⁶T. J. W. Broom, "Agricultural Development in Union County," The Monroe Journal, October 23, 1925 (magazine issue), p. 13; hereinafter cited as Broom, Development.

¹⁸⁷Williams, Agriculture, p. 7.

¹⁸⁸North Carolina Department of Agriculture and United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Forecaster, May 1931; hereinafter cited as Forecaster with date.

presence of the Hessian fly greatly decreased its cultivation. Flax was one of the very early crops, but it is no longer grown.

The first census of Union County was taken in 1850. The first census showed cotton, corn, oats, wheat, sweet potatoes, and wool as the main products. Hogs and sheep were present in fairly large numbers (15,646 and 11,635, respectively). There were not as many cattle as there were sheep. There were 2,820 horses and mules.¹⁸⁹

By 1860 cotton production had increased to 3,054 bales. Corn was first, wheat second, oats third and rye a low fourth in importance among the grains. The production of beans and peas had tripled. Cattle and horses and mules had increased in number, while the number of sheep had remained about the same.¹⁹⁰

In 1870 Union County was still suffering from the effects of the Civil War. Many of its men had died on the battlefield. Some of those who returned came back crippled and maimed. The slaves on the plantations had been freed. Confederate troops, living off the land, had depleted seed stores. Thus in 1870 cotton production was almost two

¹⁸⁹Williams, Agriculture, p. 8.

¹⁹⁰Williams, Agriculture, pp. 8-9.

thousand bales less than in 1860. Corn production was about one hundred bushels less. The production of oats, wheat, Irish potatoes and tobacco were exceptions; their production had increased in amount. Sweet potatoes, peas and beans, wool and all livestock had decreased in amount and number. The total farm production in 1870 was considerably less than in 1860.¹⁹¹

When the census of 1880 was taken the post-war recovery of Union County was complete. A larger quantity of most crops had been grown than in 1870. The amount of cotton had increased from 1,196 bales in 1870, to 8,336 bales. The corn crop had increased considerably, reaching a new peak of 338,520 bushels. The production of oats increased by almost 29,000 bushels. The production of Irish potatoes declined to 3,291 bushels in 1900. By 1880 all livestock (horses, mules, hogs, cattle, sheep had increased in numbers.¹⁹²

Tobacco had reached its highest peak in 1870 and by 1880 its production had become less than half the production of 1870. The decline of tobacco as a crop of any importance seemed almost complete by 1890 when only one acre was planted and 120 pounds were harvested.¹⁹³ For a time tobacco culture

¹⁹¹Williams, Agriculture, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹²Williams, Agriculture, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹³Williams, Agriculture, pp. 8-9.

was nearly non-existent in Union County. From around 1925 to 1937 tobacco passed through a new cycle of popularity. The top production year for this cycle must have been 1935 when 153 acres were planted. Since the end of this cycle there has been little effort to grow tobacco within Union County.¹⁹⁴

Cotton reached a peak in acreage in 1910 when 47,686 acres were planted.¹⁹⁵ Another acreage peak was reached in 1930 with 72,617 acres. From that date until 1960 acreage declined regularly, with the exception of 1949 when the acreage was 3,987 more than in 1947. The 1960 acres harvested were 11,500. In 1963 cotton was still an important money crop, although diminishing in importance.

¹⁹⁴Farm products data for the decades 1850-1910 were obtained from Williams, Agriculture, already cited. Data for the years 1921, 1924 were obtained from Crop Census maps for those years, compiled by N. C. Department of Agriculture and U. S. Department of Agriculture and issued through the Cooperative Crop Reporting Service. Data for the years 1927, 1930, 1932, 1935 were obtained from the Farm Forecaster issued by the same agencies on the dates March, 1928, May, 1931, June, 1933, February, 1935, respectively. Data for the years 1936, 1938, 1941, 1952, 1956, 1960 were derived from North Carolina Agricultural Statistics by the same agencies for those respective years. For the years 1947, 1949 data were compiled from the Farm Census Summary, published by the same agencies in the years 1947 and 1950, respectively. Data for the year 1959 were obtained from the 1959 Agricultural Census mentioned in footnote 97.

¹⁹⁵This statement and others like it apply only to those years studied. Representative years were studied in the belief that a fairly accurate picture could be formed from them.

Rye has never been a grain of significance in the county. But the number of acres increased from twelve in 1880 to twenty-one in 1890, forty-three in 1900, and sixty-two in 1910. There were 459 acres in 1927, then planting dropped. The 465 acres of 1936 are probably about the greatest amount of acres planted. For the years 1947, 1949, 1952, 1953, 1956, and 1960 none was grown for grain. Some was, however, grown in 1954 (17 acres) and 1959 (192 acres).¹⁹⁶

The other grains such as corn, oats, and wheat, have had their acreages decreased since 1921. The production of these grains has not lessened in proportion because the farmer has been able to grow more bushels on the acres he did plant. The position of the grains in reference to each other in terms of acres planted has remained about the same. Corn has usually been of the most importance. Oats have been second except for the period between 1933 and 1946. Wheat has been third except for the above mentioned period when it was second. In the years since 1941 Union County has been either first or second in the production of lespedeza seed.¹⁹⁷

During the first part of the twentieth century sor-

¹⁹⁶See footnote 194.

¹⁹⁷See footnote 194.

ghums came to be grown more and more as the years passed. Sorghums were grown for grain or seed, syrup, or silage.

In 1850, 18,000 pounds of wool were sheared. After that time the growing of wool steadily declined. The number of sheep in the county was around one thousand until 1910. Sheep have not been that numerous since.¹⁹⁸

The amount of livestock of other types has gradually increased in number since 1850, with the exception of horses and mules. Horses and mules were most numerous in 1890 when there were 37,733. With the diminution of row crops and the introduction of the tractor the number of horses and mules has shrunken. Cattle, pigs, and hogs have greatly increased in number. So much so that in 1960 Union County became third among the counties of North Carolina in the number of cattle and second in total number of livestock. It was fifth in number of milk cows.¹⁹⁹ In 1953 Union County had developed its poultry industry to the point where Union had more poultry than any of the other counties in the state.²⁰⁰

By 1963 Union County had developed a well balanced farm economy. There was no great dependence upon one partic-

¹⁹⁸See footnote 194.

¹⁹⁹See footnote 194.

²⁰⁰See footnote 194.

ular product.²⁰¹ While Union County was evolving in terms of products it was also evolving in terms of improved agricultural practices, equipment, and facilities and utilities for the home. Marketing facilities for livestock and poultry were added.

Livestock quality has been improved by bringing in proven herd sires.²⁰² Artificial insemination of cattle has made it possible for good sires to serve more females, thus more rapidly improving breeds. Registered, pure-bred herds are kept and improved by selection and careful breeding. For the marketing of livestock there are two auction markets, one in Marshville and the other in Mineral Springs. Truck routes extend throughout the county for the hauling of milk to the Carnation Milk Receiving Plant in Monroe, thus providing for this product a good market.²⁰³

One of the largest processors and buyers of Kobe lespedeza seed in the world is located in Marshville.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹This is the end of date from the sources cited in footnote 194.

²⁰²Broome, Development.

²⁰³J. A. Marsh, "Union County Agriculture," Union County, North Carolina, 1842-1953 (undated pamphlet published by Cory Press of Monroe, N. C.); hereinafter cited as Marsh, Farming.

²⁰⁴Marsh, Farming.

The progress in equipment has been extensive. There were 309 tractors in the county in 1927.²⁰⁵ By 1959 there were 2,884 tractors for 3,063 farms. In addition, in 1959, there were 523 grain combines and 1,532 trucks.²⁰⁶ While these figures do not cover every kind of equipment, it can be assumed that they give a rough indication of the degree of farm mechanization.

For the marketing and processing of poultry there are two processing plants for chickens and two processing plants for turkeys.²⁰⁷

For farm homes there has been marked improvement in conveniences. Probably 99 or 100 per cent of the farms have electricity. Many have running water. A large number of homes have bathrooms. Half of the homes (1,522) had home freezers in 1959. More than half of the homes (1,653) had telephones in the same year. Over half of the farms (1,624) had access to hard surfaced roads.²⁰⁸ Such things as television sets, radios, phonographs, food mixers, refrigerators, electric ranges, electric water heaters were not

²⁰⁵Forecaster, March, 1928.

²⁰⁶1959 Ag. Census, p. 215.

²⁰⁷Marsh, Farming.

²⁰⁸1959 Ag. Census.

listed in the 1959 census of agriculture. But undoubtedly they can be found in large numbers in homes, especially televisions, radios, and refrigerators.

Improved agricultural practices have become prevalent. Union County's Farm Agents, especially the first, T. J. W. Broom, have influenced the spread of good farming methods. The teaching of vocational agricultural classes in the county schools has infused modern farming technology into the farming communities. Practices such as terracing, strip cropping, contour plowing, and the use of neadow strips have conserved the soil. Rotation of crops, fertilization according to the results of soil tests, liming, the plowing under of grasses for green manure, deep plowing, and the growing of nitrogen fixing legumes have added to and preserved the fertility of the soil. Since 1910 there has been increasing emphasis upon such practices.²⁰⁹

The picture of recent changes in Union County agriculture can be further developed by other data from the 1959 agricultural census. There were 281,819 acres in farms which had an average size of 91.3 acres. The total land area was 411,520 acres. Of this area 68.5 per cent was in farms. The value per acre of farmland was \$99.54 in 1954

²⁰⁹Broom, Development.

and \$139.14 in 1959. The proportion of tenacy was 28.8 per cent in 1954 but only 18.5 in 1959.²¹⁰

²¹⁰1959 Ag. Census, p. 175.

CHAPTER VIII

RESOURCES, TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, INDUSTRY

Industry, transportation and communication have been closely related in Union County. The resources were present to begin with, of course. They have had a great influence upon the shaping of agriculture and industry. Transportation and communication facilities began to be developed as the people moved in. Then, shortly before the beginning of the twentieth century, industry was introduced.

The natural resources might be divided into five groups: vegetation, animal, water, mineral, and soil. Trees are the main natural resource in the form of vegetation. The whole state of North Carolina was once covered almost entirely with trees. There was very little grass.²¹¹ The trees at first presented an obstacle to the farmer. As time passed the trees began to have more value because of their usefulness for building and because of their relative scarcity. The kinds of timbers were listed in 1872 as pine, oak, hickory, ash, and poplar.²¹² In 1955 Union County's timber resources were listed as 210.2 million

²¹¹North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, The Soils of North Carolina (Raleigh; N. C. State College, 1955), p. 19; hereinafter cited as N. C. Soils.

²¹²Branson, 1872 Directory, pp. 217-219.

board-feet of pine and red cedar, 88 million board-feet of gum, maple, and yellow poplar, and 51.3 million board-feet of oak and other hardwoods.²¹³ The commercial importance of this timber is shown by the fact that in 1958 there were many different buyers of woods located in or near the county. Out of a total of 48 buyers, 43 were interested in buying pine. There were 27 buyers of pine sawtimber, 14 of pine pulpwood, one of pine for fence posts, and one of saw logs. Three buyers bought black gum, sweet gum, poplar, oak, birch, soft maple and sycamore for commercial veneer blocks. One buyer bought dogwood for shuttle bolts, another bought red oak and poplar for furniture dimension bolts.²¹⁴

The wildlife of Union County comprises the animal resources. The animals are of no commercial importance. They are important as a source of recreation. Quail, rabbits, foxes, opossums, squirrels, and fish are found.²¹⁵

Water resources are composed of the ground water

²¹³Robert W. Larson, North Carolina's Timber Supply (U. S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southeastern Forest Experiment Station, 1955), p. 45.

²¹⁴John L. Gray and L. H. Hobbs, Union County Timber Marketing Guide (N. C. Agricultural Extension Service and Southeast Forest Experiment Station, U. S. Forest Service, 1958), pp. 3-6.

²¹⁵Osborne, Union.

supply and the surface water supply. Surface waters consist of Rocky River (on the boundary line), and Goose, Crooked, Richardson, Stewart, Lanes,²¹⁶ Twelve Mile, Waxhaw, Cain Crooked and Beaver Dam Creeks.²¹⁷ Lake Lee and Lake Monroe are artificial lakes from which Monroe obtains its water supply.²¹⁸ Plentiful ground water is found throughout the county. It is usually soft and pure. In 1902 it was reported that Monroe had two artesian wells, 1028 and 968 feet deep. The water was noted for its alleged curative properties.²¹⁹ The wells, located on opposite corners of the courthouse square, are now no longer in use for the city water supply but have been converted into drinking fountains.

Union County's soil was originally quite fertile. Through "land butchery" it lost much of its fertility. Later, when improvement and conservation practices had been adopted, it regained some of its fertility.

²¹⁶(Mrs.) S. C. B. Ehringhaus and (Mrs.) Carl Goerch, North Carolina Almanac and State Industrial Guide, 1950-51 (Raleigh: Almanac Publishing Company, 1950), pp. 622-623; hereinafter cited as Ehringhaus and Goerch, Almanac.

²¹⁷C. M. Miller, Map of Union County (Salisbury, N. C.: 1907), hereinafter cited as 1907 Map.

²¹⁸Visit Union.

²¹⁹Stack and Beasley, Sketches, pp. 40-43.

Decay of subsurface rock has produced the soils of Union County. Most of the rock underneath is slate. Ninety per cent of the soil is derived from slate. Consequently, the county is classified as a slate county. Granite, diorite, and gneiss subsurface rocks are found in the southwestern part of the county and along the western border. The resultant soils are different from those in other parts of the county. They have a greater tendency to be sandy. The quartz content is high. Intense red coloration from the oxidation of iron is often found. In the southeastern part of the county sandstone is found associated with blue shale. Resultant topsoils here are quite often gray. Along the borders of streams are found alluvial soils which tend to be darker than other soils because of the presence of organic matter.²²⁰

Soils are classified according to great soil groups, soil families, soil series, and soil types. All of Union County soil belongs to the Red-Yellow Podzolic group.²²¹ Most of the soil belongs to the Alamance and Georgeville soil families, since they are what the weathering of slate produces. Alamance soil is the more extensive. The weather-

²²⁰Williams, Agriculture

²²¹N. C. Soils, pp. 36-38.

ing of granite and gneiss in the southwestern part of the county has produced Cecil and Durham soils. Dioritic rock, sometimes occurring on the surface as dark green boulders, has weathered into Iredell soil. Granville soil has been produced by the weathering of sandstones and shales in the southeastern part of the county. The darker alluvial soils near streams are labeled Congaree, while the lighter colored soils are called Wehadkee.²²²

The mineral resources of the county can hardly be disconnected from industry within the county. Therefore, a discussion of the mineral resources will lead directly into a discussion of the industries of the county which have used these mineral resources. It might be added that the term "mineral resources," as herein used, applies to all substances which can be dug or extracted from the earth.

Writing in 1950, Goerch and Ehringhaus said that Union County

. . . has rolling, fertile land with an elevation ranging between 500 and 700 feet, and a mild climate. Gold, lead, and zinc occur in the westernmost portion but, little mining has been done. Blue clay is found near Monroe, and shale is scattered throughout the county.²²³

²²²Williams, Agriculture, p. 12.

²²³Ehringhaus and Goerch, Almanac, p. 622.

These statements are true except "but little mining has been done."²²⁴ A very considerable amount of mining for gold has been done. In addition, silver has been found in the county. There have been between thirty-eight and forty-four gold mines in Union County at one time or another.²²⁵ The number of mines indicates mining has been quite extensive in Union County. Sharpe says that the Howie Mine has produced more than \$750,000 worth of gold.²²⁶ In addition to the mines there are numerous diggings in the county, chiefly in the western half. Most of the mines are in the vicinity of Indian Trail or northeast of Waxhaw. Of the metals found, only gold has been mined to any extent. In some cases, however, the value of the silver in the gold mines has been equal to the value of the gold.²²⁷ Further evidence of the

²²⁴Ehringhaus and Goerch, Almanac.

²²⁵Herman J. Bryson, The Mining Industry in North Carolina During 1927 and 1928 (Raleigh: N. C. Department of Conservation and Development, 1930), p. 19. Herman J. Bryson, Gold Deposits in North Carolina (Raleigh: N. C. Department of Conservation and Development, 1936), pp. 91-102. W. C. Herr and George B. Hanna, Ores of North Carolina (city where published, publisher, publication date--probably 1887--not given), pp. 260-264. Henry B. C. Nitze and H. A. J. Wilkens, Gold Mining in North Carolina and adjacent South Appalachian Regions (Raleigh: Guy V. Barnes, 1897), pp. 62-63; herein-after cited as Wilkens, Gold. Also 1869, 1872, 1887, 1896 Directories by Branson.

²²⁶Sharpe, Flatheads.

²²⁷Wilkens, Gold.

importance of gold mining in the history of the county can be gained from the 1850 census. It shows that more people were engaged in gold mining than in any other occupation except farming.

Another mineral industry in the county, which was in operation in 1963, was the slate quarry at Bakers community. This quarry produced a tremendous amount of slate rock to be used with asphalt in the paving of roads. The rock was also mixed with concrete as an aggregate. The quarry was owned and operated by the Superior Stone Company.²²⁸

Clay has been of importance. It has been used for the making of jugs and pottery for some time. One of the industries of the county around 1896 was the manufacture of jugs and pottery by Thomas Gay near Alton.²²⁹ There have been a few brick yards throughout the county in the past. Around 1907 there were at least three, one near Stouts, one a short distance to the west of Indian Trail, and one in the southern part of the county slightly west of the Rocky River Road.²³⁰ Kendrick Brick and Tile, northwest of Bakers, was founded in

²²⁸Richard J. Council, Commercial Rocks of the Volcanic Slate Series, North Carolina (Raleigh: N. C. Department of Conservation and Development, 1954), pp. 20-21.

²²⁹State Board of Agriculture, North Carolina and Its Resources (Winston: M. I. and J. C. Stewart, 1896), p. 211.

²³⁰1907 Map.

1937. In 1963 it employed 135 workers and produced brick, tile, and flue liners for Union and surrounding counties.²³¹

All of the industries present in 1963 were started after 1919. One (Manetta Mills company) started making bedspreads and blankets in 1923. Another began making combed yarn for knitting in 1920. In each of the years 1937 (Kendrick), 1942, 1945, 1946, one new industry began. Two new factories began in the years of 1947, 1948, 1949. The largest industry in terms of workers employed came in 1952. In 1953 there were again two new factories started. The years 1954, 1955, and 1956 brought only one each. The tempo began to pick up in 1957 and 1958, for two came in each year. Peaks were reached in the years 1959 and 1961 with four new industries for each year. Radiant Products and Armour Creameries were begun in 1960. Three industries were begun in 1962 and one in 1963. The total number of employees for all industries is around 3,700.²³² Forty per cent of the industry is in textiles, the same percentage in metal working, and twenty per cent in woodworking. However, more people work at industries outside the county than inside.

²³¹Union County Industrial Development Commission, mimeographed leaflet, 1963; hereinafter cited as U. C. I. D. C., Union Companies.

²³²U. C. I. D. C., Union Companies.

Some work in Mecklenburg County, others in Lancaster County, South Carolina, at the Springs Cotton Mills and the Grace Bleachery. The total number of people who commute to employment outside the county was 5,500 in 1963.²³³

There are two aspects to transportation, ways and means. The ways have been walking, riding horseback, riding in wagons, carriages, coaches, trains, cars and trucks.

Probably the first ways were animal paths. The Indian, when he came to the area, followed and enlarged the paths, perhaps adding some of his own. The early settlers had these paths to follow when they came in. Finding direct routes to markets outside, the people of the area began to shape new ways with these markets as their focus.

The Landsford Road runs in a southwesterly direction through the southeastern part of Union into Lancaster County, South Carolina, and then to the Catawba River where Land's Ford once was. The Landsford Road is probably the oldest in the county. The Rocky River Road is said to have been surveyed by George Washington.²³⁴ He traveled over a part of the Rocky River Road during his Southern Tour. It was

²³³Visit Union.

²³⁴Osborne, Union.

on this same road, about six miles south of Union in South Carolina that Buford's Massacre occurred during the Revolutionary War. Cornwallis marched up a part of the Rocky River Road in Union County.²³⁵ There is an undocumented story to the effect that, while work was being done on the Rocky River Road preparatory to paving it, some buried skeletons were found near Prospect community. Upon investigation it was learned that the skeletons were of British soldiers.

The completion of the Seaboard Railway in 1874 from Wilmington through Marshville, Wingate, Monroe, Bakers, and Indian Trail has been mentioned elsewhere. By 1890 another line of the railway was extended through Mineral Springs and Waxhaw. Before the completion of the railroads, goods were shipped out by wagon trains. Travelers were conveyed by stagecoach. After the completion of the railroads commerce and travel were greatly facilitated.²³⁶ The people had greater opportunities for prosperity when they could easily travel and ship to other parts of the United States.

²³⁵Jule B. Warren and L. Polk Denmark, North Carolina Atlas (Raleigh: Warren Publishing Company, 1952), p. 15. Capus Waynick, North Carolina Roads and Their Builders (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Company, 1952), reproduction of 1775 map inserted between pages 168 and 169.

²³⁶Redwine, Heritage.

The grading, straightening, and stabilization of roads by "rocking" (covering with rocks) began in 1895 with the authorization by the state legislature of the use of convicts from the district prison camp in Union County for road improvement. Although the work of the chain-gang was confined in 1897 to Monroe township, its work did much to encourage and produce better roads.²³⁷

Improved methods of transportation require better roads. For the wagon and carriage good roads are not as important as they are for the automobile. The high speed of the automobile, coupled with greater tendency to become stuck in mud, gave added impetus to the development of more and better roads. Fords, across which the horse drawn vehicle could pass without much difficulty, were seldom negotiable in the automobile. Therefore bridges became a necessity. Thus the introduction of the automobile influenced the building of better roads. In 1918 mention was made in The Monroe Journal of the first automobile of the county. It was said to have been brought in by Lorenzo Medlin.²³⁸

Progress in the building and paving of roads was

²³⁷Stack and Beasley, Sketches.

²³⁸The Monroe Journal, March 26, 1918.

sporadic, being delayed by the world wars and the depression. But by 1963 the county could boast of 1,251.4 miles of public roads. There were 711.5 miles of hard-surfaced roads and 539.9 miles of unpaved roads, with an average of 1.11 miles of paved road for each square mile of land area in the county.²³⁹

Since Union County adjoins Mecklenburg County and is only 24 miles from Charlotte, some of the characteristics of both places, it is claimed, "rub off" on the county. So the transportation facilities of the Mecklenburg area are advertised along with those of Union. As a result, certain facts about Mecklenburg are of importance. Charlotte has a jetport to which county people can travel in less than an hour. Charlotte, being the second largest trucking center in the United States, has 3,260 trucks operating in and out every 24 hours.²⁴⁰

Two United States Highways pass through Union County. United States 601 is a major north-south highway. United States 74 runs in an east-west direction. Buses owned by Queen City Trailways Bus Company operate through the county

²³⁹Union County Industrial Development Commission, Union County (printed leaflet, 1963); hereinafter cited as U. C. I. D. C., Union County.

²⁴⁰U. C. I. D. C., Union County.

daily.²⁴¹

Communication has changed radically since the county was founded. One of the earliest contributors to better communication was the postal service. An impression of the growth of the postal system can be gained by noting the increase in the number of post offices from 1869 until 1896.²⁴² Twelve post offices were listed in 1869. Listed in 1872 were three additions. Published in 1887 was a lengthened list, fourteen more. The number had nearly doubled. However, twenty-two names were published as additions in 1896. The total was around fifty-one. As time passed the number of post offices decreased. Better roads and the use of automobiles by rural carriers to distribute the mail made a large number unnecessary. In 1963 there were only five post offices.

In 1907 there was a large number of telephone exchanges located throughout the county.²⁴³ There seems also to have been a considerable number of telephones. For some reason the number of telephones in rural areas

²⁴¹Union County Industrial Development Commission, Monroe (printed leaflet, undated).

²⁴²1869, 1872, 1887, 1896 Directories by Branson.

²⁴³1907 Map.

declined drastically after that time. By about 1950 the number of rural telephones had begun to increase. By 1960 at least 57 per cent of the people had telephones.²⁴⁴

Radios, phonographs, and televisions had come by the third quarter of the twentieth century. Radios came in the late thirties. They were powered by batteries. Television may have been first advertised in 1949, as stated elsewhere.²⁴⁵

There are three newspapers published in Union County. The oldest is The Monroe Enquirer. Its first issue is dated May 27, 1873.²⁴⁶ W. C. Wolfe and W. J. Boylin were the founders. The paper was bought in August, 1893 by B. Cleggy Ashcraft and Eugene Ashcraft. The Monroe Journal was established in 1894 by G. M. Beasley and R. F. Beasley. Their sons by the same names continued editing and managing the paper.²⁴⁷ The Marshville Home is the third newspaper. The three papers had a combined circulation of almost 12,000 in 1962.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴Wachovia Bank and Trust Company, North Carolina City and County Statistics, 1960, p. 5.

²⁴⁵See footnote 90.

²⁴⁶The Monroe Enquirer, Vol. I, No. 1, May 27, 1873.

²⁴⁷The Monroe Journal, February 8, 1938.

²⁴⁸Visit Union, p. 10.

Electrification of homes is widespread. Very few, if any, homes have no electricity. Duke Power Company, the City of Monroe, and the Union Electric Membership Corporation supply power to the county.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹The Monroe Enquirer, February 23, 1956.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY

First in the Union County area was the Waxhaw Indian. The Waxhaws were studied by John Lawson around 1700. Their morals and customs were interesting, unique, and different from those of the whites whom they preceded. An epidemic or wars with other tribes or both so decimated their ranks that the remaining Indians moved from the area and joined forces with the Catawba Indians.

A short time before 1750, people who had moved from Scotland to Ireland to Pennsylvania, in that order, began coming into the area. They brought with them a love for the Presbyterian religion and learning. Quickly they built a church for their community. Today it is located in South Carolina. The church was a place of worship on Sunday and a school during the week. Culture radiated from this point into the surrounding countryside.

A few years later, before 1775, other settlers with different ideas began coming into the area. Germans settled in the southern and northern parts of the area later to be enclosed in Union County. English settlers established themselves in the eastern part of the area.

Along with the new settlers came missionaries, Baptist and Methodist. The German settlers probably brought

the Lutheran denomination. The missionaries implanted the seeds for their particular denomination. The area today is mainly composed of the three denominations: Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian.

The settlers developed a self-sufficient agricultural economy which eventually evolved into a specialized crop economy with dependence upon cotton. Two world wars jolted the farmers out of this pattern and they began to diversify their crops and move into greater beef, milk, and poultry production. Improved agricultural practices were instituted. Some land was taken out of row crop production and planted in pines. But the increased production per acre allowed the farmer to grow as much or more than he had before.

People in the area were at first indifferent toward the Revolutionary War. After such battles as Buford's Massacre, sentiment began to turn toward the Revolutionary cause. The Battle of the Waxhaws was fought in the Union County area.

It was voted in 1842 by the General Assembly of North Carolina that a county be "erected" from parts of Mecklenburg and Anson counties. Within a short time the county was organized. In 1846 the Mexican War began. To it Union furnished volunteers. Meanwhile, slavery was

spreading over the county with the spread of cotton culture.

Many men from the county fought in the Civil War which began in 1861. The Civil War halted and reversed the progress of the county. Men were killed and wounded. Property was destroyed in a few instances. Supplies were used up. Draft animals were scarce. Civil War and Reconstruction helped permanently establish the Democratic voting pattern in the South and Union County. The pattern has been followed by Union County with few exceptions.

The completion of a railroad through the county in 1874 did much to re-establish prosperity. So did the Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. While the killing of soldiers is not good, the effects of these wars were beneficial because they stimulated business and industry. Each war stimulated more than the one before it.

World War I stimulated too much, for the post-war adjustment turned into a depression. The depression helped shatter the farmers' faith in cotton. It also helped the Democratic Party. The party in power, the Republican, was blamed for the depression.

Soldiers from the county fought in all three wars of the twentieth century, some with distinction, some with anonymity. They brought back from the wars trophies and

new ideas.

During World War II the army maneuvers, staged in Union and other counties, and Camp Sutton both stimulated business, especially the retail trade, more than the war by itself could have. The moving of the county toward more dependence upon manufacturing was greatly speeded by World War II and events connected with it. Nearly all of the manufacturing concerns in the county in 1963 were begun after World War II had been started. Farmers began seeking jobs in manufacturing within and outside the county as additional mechanization gave them more free time. Gold mining, which once was the largest industry in the county, breathed its last with the coming of World War II.

The wars, the Atomic Age, and the Space Age have stimulated education. Subjects have been added to the curricula. Schools have been consolidated. Better equipment has been provided for the new buildings. With larger schools instruction has been improved because the teachers can teach in their fields of preparation rather than having to teach in several different fields.

The county encountered the race problem when demonstrations were held in Monroe in the latter part of the fifties. The first encounter was not successful. With the departure of some of the extremists among the Negroes

(for example, to Cuba) and the emotional sobering of the whites, comparative tranquility has been restored. Some amount of "physical" integration has taken place. How much "mental" integration and improvement of the Negro's social status has taken place is uncertain.

Along these lines of development Union County entered the 1960's.

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